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be required, but do we not in addition need to set up definite standards of achievement? Publicity for liberty and victory loans, book funds, etc., would have failed without definite quotas for states and communities, i. e., without definite standards of achievements which stimulate endeavor and arouse local pride. Definite standards of attainment represent a fundamental psychological principle which has too small a place in library organization and administration.

I do not know, of course, whether the League would feel able to standardize its own membership or whether it would prefer to have the standards fixed by, and their application entrusted in part to, some detached body, such as the A. L. A. Let us hope, however, that we do not have to look too far ahead for the time when we can say that this state or that is meeting the recognized professional standards.

Sooner or later, and of course as soon as possible, the up-to-standard commission should be in a position to apply minimum standards to all local library activities. I cannot omit to express the belief that we must look forward to such standardization and make it one of our principal objects of endeavor, but that is a very large subject which I have neither the detailed information or time at present to discuss. The little that I do know about the problem of standardization strengthens my belief that when we come to attack it, it will not be found so difficult as we may now imagine. In this optimistic view I am encouraged by what Mr. Sanborn writes in the June *Library Journal*: "Judging from an acquaintance with many librarians and as many library trustees, I feel safe in saying that practically every one of them has an honest pride in his own library and a desire to see it better than any other in its class."

#### HOW THE PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMISSION OF INDIANA WORKS WITH THE SMALL PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF THE STATE

By MARGARET A. WADE, *Assistant Organizer, Indiana Public Library Commission*

The Public Library Commission of Indiana, now about twenty years old, is among the older organizations established in the various states for the purpose of aiding and increasing the efficiency of public libraries.

Very naturally a large part of the work of the commission lies in its service to the smaller libraries. To fully appreciate the value of such service one must at some time be a trustee or the librarian of a small library and learn by actual experience how many and how varied are the problems in administration and economy which develop at a rapid rate from the moment the possibility of having a free library in the town is considered.

Few large towns or cities are now without well established libraries with trained librarians to administer them. Their real difficulties are comparatively few and are

more easily adjusted. It is the library in the small town or rural community which finds the public library commission "a very present help."

Many of our smaller libraries have had their origin in the women's clubs or among the school people who have felt the need of books but who did not fully understand the best method of attaining the desired result. How to go about getting a collection of books, where to house them, what to do with them, and how to keep up the supply; these are questions which someone must answer.

Public interest must be aroused and stimulated, and counsel given. A plan of organization that will be acceptable and at the same time insure legal rights must be formulated. The public library commission is called upon for advice. Meetings are held at which a representative from

the commission explains the laws of the state which concern libraries and tells how to organize the local board, the legal rights of boards as to tax levies and extension of service; how to begin service without a building; how to obtain the expected Carnegie donation, etc.

An organization is finally effected and the newly organized board starts on its way, light of heart and brimful of enthusiasm and energy. But traps for the unwary spring up at unexpected times and places. In case a new building is to be erected a location must be decided upon. If the lot is a gift, frequently it is in an undesirable part of town. Shall the board accept it, or will it be wiser to decline the gift and buy a lot on a more prominent corner? An architect is to be selected and plans drawn for a building. The commission is usually expected to advise on every point. The commission office has pictures and plans of many library buildings and is able not only to suggest what is most desirable, but to point to mistakes in building made in other communities.

Sometimes an unwise board takes the bit in its teeth and rushes on with its plans without consulting the commission or without heeding its advice, and comes to grief with its building. An instance of the sort occurred recently in the case of a library that had obtained a gift of money for a new building. The exterior of this building was artistically correct, the interior very pleasing to the eye; but the shelving was of assorted heights and lengths. Many feet of beautiful panel effects ornamented the interior, but there was not sufficient shelf space to hold all of the books in the old collection, to say nothing of future additions. It is very important that shelving, periodical racks and other furnishings be of proper construction and dimensions, and of this part of the work the average board knows little.

The organization of the library, the classification and arrangement of books, and the establishing of a loan system demand the assistance of a trained worker. Often the income of the small library does not

permit the employment of a trained librarian and the work of organizing the library devolves upon the field organizers from the public library commission. An organizer spends three or four days—possibly a week—at the library, accessioning, classifying, shelf listing, and putting the library into working condition.

The commission furnishes lists of supplies which will be necessary to start the work and tells where they may be bought.

High schools are also given assistance in the work of organizing their libraries, and teacher and pupils instructed in the use of the library and its care.

A most important feature of any library's work is the selection of books. Funds are usually limited and librarians and trustees are urged to consult the commission before placing the first big order. Book lists, selected to suit the needs of each individual community, are compiled and given to any library, old or new, that asks for them. Commission workers also visit the book shops with any librarian or board member desiring such help, and give personal advice and assistance in making up an order of books. Often someone from the commission office is asked to assume this responsibility alone, and having been given authority to spend a certain sum, selection is made of books which will be useful in that particular library.

The traveling libraries department of the commission frequently renders service by loaning collections of books, either miscellaneous collections or books on special subjects, to the struggling library having an income of \$3,500 or less and whose book allowance is not sufficient for its needs. These books may be kept from three to six months and the service is free. Traveling library collections are sent only to the libraries that have the local maximum tax levy and no books are sent to libraries that do not file their regular reports at the commission office.

Instruction, too, is given in many cases where the library cannot afford a trained librarian. Sometimes this is given in the commission office, but more often to the

new librarian in her own library. She is shown the correct way to keep her records; how to make her reports; the simple rudiments of ordering, accessioning, classifying and shelving books, and advice is also given in regard to repairing and binding of books.

Where the board and the librarian are wide awake, this instruction will be followed by a six weeks' course in library methods at the summer school which is held by the commission each year. From thirty to forty students attend this course and receive instruction from the commission staff and additional instructors, as outside help is needed. Only those students are admitted who are regularly appointed librarians or assistants in some public library or high school library, and the institution reaps the direct benefit of better service as a result of this instruction which is free to all Indiana students.

The commission aims to have some member of the staff visit every library in the state once a year. Public addresses are given by the secretary of the commission and counsel given to trustees as well as librarians. This does not necessarily mean consideration of large problems, but often just talking things over and making suggestions as to the librarian's work, or the budget, or thoughtless mistakes in policy. Here, again, the emphasis is on the work with the smaller libraries.

Two assistant organizers are in the field most of the time, visiting libraries, suggesting and instructing, and, in the case of new libraries, conducting the work of organization.

In matters which require legislation the libraries, as a rule, depend entirely upon the commission. A committee from the state association of librarians is generally appointed to assist in special cases, but the initiative in obtaining wise new laws needed and changes in the old ones lies mainly with the commission. Definiteness in rights of library boards, possibilities of extension of service, all legal authorization, are results of commission activities.

Informal district meetings of librarians and trustees are held in the several districts of the state throughout the year, some member of the commission staff attending each meeting. An outline of the program is made by the secretary of the commission for most of these meetings, the subjects discussed being of a very practical nature. Questions of binding, new books, janitors, L. C. cards, and always library extension, are considered. Usually there is a round table discussion in which all present take part.

These meetings are particularly helpful to the librarians from small libraries who are not always able to attend the larger state meetings. They bring their individual problems, receive suggestions as to their solution; interest in their work is stimulated and they are given an opportunity of meeting and knowing other members of their profession. The district meetings do much to encourage the young librarian who, by taking at first some slight part in the program, gains confidence in her ability to do things and to present her ideas and opinions to an audience. Older librarians are apt to forget their own abysmal ignorance at the beginning of a library career, and do not realize what a little encouragement of this sort means to the less experienced members of the profession.

The *Library Occurrent*, a quarterly bulletin published by the commission, is still another feature designed chiefly to help the small libraries. It gives recommended lists of books and pamphlets and calls attention to those which are undesirable. It includes news notes about the libraries and librarians of the state and any information which may be of interest or benefit to those engaged in library work, or a bit of inspiration that may come as a refreshing breeze to the librarian who works alone with no professional associates. This bulletin is sent free to all librarians and trustees in Indiana. The commission also supplies free copies of the *A. L. A. Book-list* to libraries of the state whose income is less than \$2,000, and we aim to have it used.

Commission work, like most work of an educational nature, has its discouraging side. To organize a new library in a good, new building, and then return after a season during which it has been administered by an inefficient or careless librarian, or one too old to take any degree of interest in the work aside from that of a booklover, is one of these discouraging features. To see a board of trustees spend every available penny in the construction of a building designed for ornament rather than utility, and leave not a cent for books or for salaries, is another. These cases, fortunately, are the exception. More often we find that the appreciative librarian of the small library has put forth every effort to carry out the plans advised by the commission, and that she and her board are all working for the best interests of the community. When the commission visitor arrives the librarian usually has a list of questions ready. She has a little extra money for books and, wishing to use it wisely, wants a list of the best ones to buy. Possibly she has some new books which she has been unable to classify correctly—will the visitor help her? What about a certain new novel—is it the thing for her library? Shall she buy second-hand books, and where? Many old public documents and pamphlets have been allowed to accumulate—which are worth keeping and which shall she discard? These, and dozens of other questions, many of them involving a "Please tell that

to my board," are asked. Worries and difficulties are brought up and talked over and sometimes the commission worker acts as peacemaker between neighboring library boards when it comes to a question of extension work.

Through correspondence also many problems are solved. It may be that a new assistant is needed, perhaps a new librarian. The commission keeps a file of names of those who are available in the profession and can tell who would best fit into this or that position. Many and varied are the questions which come with each day's mail: Hours of opening the library; the city treasurer wants a salary; who wrote a certain book? What shall we do about tubercular borrowers? About fumigation of books? Our board president will not tell us what funds are available—what can we do with him? Shall we accept certain gifts? What charge shall be made in the case of out of town pupils who wish to use the library? These are samples of the queries which come from all over the state.

One librarian recently expressed her opinion by saying that "The commission is the real backbone of the work for small libraries of the state." These are the things that make the commission worker feel that efforts have not all been in vain and that there is a very definite work for the Public Library Commission to perform in helping the small library serve its patrons more effectively and thoroughly.

## LIBRARY COMMISSIONS AND THE HIGH SCHOOL OR RURAL SCHOOL LIBRARY

BY ELIZABETH B. WALES, *Secretary, Missouri Library Commission*

Since it has been decreed that I am not to have the pleasure of sitting with you in counsel, I shall discourse in a letter upon the subject assigned me rather than in a more formal way.

As the matter now stands, the problem of the high schools and the rural schools in the management of their libraries is governed by two factors—the knowledge of what is best in the organization and de-

velopment of a library, and the money with which to produce results. The first of these desiderata should be found in the principal or teacher of the school, the second (in the providence of the taxpayer), is in the hands of the school board or committee. At present no high school management denies the necessity of a library. Indeed, one meets with the most bristling affirmative if one questions the existence